Cosper, Ronald. *Barawa Lexicon : a wordlist of eight South Bauchi (West Chadic) languages : Boghom, Buli, Dott, Geji, Jimi, Polci, Sayanci and Zul*, (vol 39). Munich : LINCOM EUROPA, 1999, 158 p. LINCOM Studies in African Linguistics.

The publication of new data on little documented Chadic languages is rare enough an event for any linguist to be enthusiastic when they hear the news. So was I when Ronald Cosper's *Barawa Lexicon* was announced and published by Lincom Europa. Before this, the main reference on the topic was (Shimizu, 1978).

Shimizu's work, written after a survey carried out in 1974 and 1975, comprises wordlists covering 108 items on 32 languages, map, subclassification, cognate percentages, and sound correspondences. 'Barawa' is a term chosen by Shimizu to name the speakers of these 32 languages, which he considers to be a dialect continuum. He adds that « the use of the term 'Barawa' to denote this group was confirmed both in the Dass district generally and by the Chief of Boot » (*op.cit.,* p. 7). In the various trips I did to the Dass area, Boot, Sigidi and during my fieldwork in the Sayanci area over the past decade, the term Barawa was accepted by all speakers except those of Sigidi and Zaar who don't know the word.

Cosper's *Barawa Lexicon* covers 915 lexical items for 8 languages : Jimi, Zul, Geji, Polci, Dott, Sayanci, Buli and Boghom. In the introduction, he gives the chart of phonemes for the eight languages. The main interest of this work lies then in the increase in the number of lexical items documented. Unfortunately, from what I can judge, the quality of the data is far from satisfactory. I will give a few examples where I will compare Cosper's data with the one I collected on two of these languages : Zaar (Cosper's Sayanci) on which I have been working regularly since 1991, and Zoɗi (Cosper's Dott) on which I did 2 weeks' fieldwork in 1999.

Zaar

Cosper marks two tones for Zaar, although he says « Some of these languages, e.g., Sayanci, may in fact have three phonetic levels of tone, but as Schneeberg points out, they are phonologically analyzable as two-level systems. » Sayanci does have a three-level phonetic tone system. The phonological two-level system can only be the result of a phonological analysis involving a very elaborate system of rules (cf. Schneeberg 74). Failing that, we are left, in the case of Cosper's work, with a two-level phonetic transcription, which in the case of Saya, is simply wrong. [1]

We will just mention a few cases of plain mistakes in marking the tones :

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data
2	woman, female	**gât**	**gɜ̀t**
124	compound	**dân**	**dɜ̀n**
146	grindstone	**vúun**	**vuun**
148	hut	**víin**	**vììn**
448	war	**máàndə**	**maandə**
664	fight	**máàndɘ́**	**maandə**
294	insect	**zhíɓar**	**???**
304	worm	**zhiɓər**	**ʒìbɜ̀r**

Some cases of strange translations or notations :

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data
5	*girl*	**ŋaayət** (*sic* !)	**ŋaa-gɜ̀t**
7	*daughter*	**nyíi, ɲáagət**	**ɲíí**
688	*walk, wander*	**nyalán**	**ŋgeláŋ [ŋgyeláŋ]**
453	*conversation*	**ŋgáàghənlaa**	**??? [2]**
508	*short*	**afúbm**	**àà fúpm hŋ́[3]**

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[1] When quoting my own data, I will use a three-level (phonetic) transcription (H= acute ; L = grave ; M = unmarked ; long vowels will be marked with double letter, each one bearing a tone).

[2] I have no translation for the word *conversation*. **ŋgáɑ́ɣ̂n laa** means *to rest*, lit. *to take work* (??!!!).

Items 477, 495, 595 and 596 concern the 'indefinite' [cf. Hausa *wani* (sing.) /*wasu* (pl.)]. As a determiner, it is postposed to the noun and appears as **wón / gón** [**gwón**]. As a pronoun, it has two forms : **gón** (sing.) **gyaa gón** (pl.) resp. [**gwón**] and [**gyaa gwón**].

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data
477	most	**gyaagwón**	**???**
495	some (wasu)	**gyaagwón**	**gyaa gón**
595	one (wani)	**gwán**	**gón**
596	some (wasu)	**gyaagwán**	**gyaa gón**

A cursory look at the items concerning demonstratives is sufficient to wonder whether the author has taken the care of reading his manuscript before sending it to the printer. The same translation (gíi) is given for (601) *this* and (602) *that* , which should be resp. gín/giní and gíí, whereas (597) *this* is given as gíin and (598) *that* as gii !

Generally, what strikes the reader when having a cursory look at Cosper's lexicon is the absence of a minimum analysis of the data, which leads the author to mistaking syntagms for lexical items, or being inconsistent in his use of verbs or verbal nouns in the translations.
Let's take the following items :

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data
734	fart	**tuurgunyoghən**	**túúrɣ̂n ɲôɣŋ** [4]
748	smell[5]	**ɗuughənzhóghŋ**	**wúmĝn ʒòɣŋ** [6]
75	mouth	**vii**	**vìì**
704	shout	**dláarvi**	**ɓááɣ̂n vìì** [7]
706	speak	**wúlvi**	**wúlɣ̂n vìì** [8]

Likewise, (30), saghátkən (saɣátkə̂n) is the verbal noun of saɣát *to be intelligent* ; *intelligent person* should be **mur ɣɔ́ saɣákə̂n**

The mistakes are too numerous for me to go on listing them. To conclude this passage concerning Zaar, I will just give the list of independant pronouns :

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data
608	I	**myân**	**myááni / myáàn**
609	thou	**kyan**	**kyááni / kyáàn**
610	he, she, it	**yân**	**yááni / yáàn**
611	we	**myâni**	**myààní / myàán**
612	you	**kyáàni**	**kyààní / kyàán**
613	they	**yaashi**	**yààshí**

Zoɗi

The same problems appear in the work on zoɗi. The general impression is that of a sloppy work due to lack of analysis.
If one looks at the list of verbs given by Cosper, it is obvious that some suffixes have not been properly identified.

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[3] Lit. : *it is not far/long/tall* (**àà** = 3s. Perf.); the negation (**hĺ̩**) is missing in Cosper's translation. The adjectives **ndóngat** or **ndúm◼li** are a good translation. So is the verb **ɗat**, to be short. The adjective **ndúúri** is used to qualify something that has been shortened.
[4] Lit : to cook shit ; [**ɲôghŋ] is in fact /ɲôkn/.**
[5] From the Hausa *sansana*, one guesses the English verb is supposed to be transitive.
[6] Lit : *hear/feel a smell*. **ɗúghə̂n** is the noun verb of the verb **ɗu**, to beat. The expression **ɗu zhòghŋ** may mean « to have a strong smell »
[7] lit. : *cut mouth* ; NB : **riiŋ** = *a shout*. **ʧ̣ìɣá** (3s. Continuous) **riiŋ** = *he is shouting*
[8] lit. : *say mouth*.

The suffix **-ti** is used in zoɗi to form verbal nouns. On the forms given by Cosper, the suffix appears haphazardly :

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data[9]
715	peep at	**yéli**	**yeli, yeliti**
716	see	**yeli**	**yeli, yeliti**
717	watch	**yeliti**	**yeli, yeliti**
762	blow (of wind)	**bakti**	**fwat; fwatti**
763	burn (of fire)	**bak**	**bàk; bàktì**
730	desire	**ndəkti**	**ndə́kə; ndə́kəti**
739	hear, feel	**wom**	**wóm, womti**

Likewise, a **-tiya** suffix (secondary verbal noun ?) appears in his data, which has not been properly analysed :

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data
675	return	**doŋtíya**	**dòŋ, dòŋtì**
774	break (in pieces)	**tlaartíya**	**ɬar, ɬarti**
885	be suitable (?)	**taatita, taatiyá**	**taa, taati[10]**

The perfect/accomplished in zoɗi is formed with **-ak** suffixed to the verb :

number	gloss	Cosper	Own data
788	fill	**zuwak**	**dzù, dzùtì**
724	be tired	**kəmmak**	**kə́m, kəmti**
691	agree to	**kappák**	**kap, kapti**

As a conclusion, I can only say that this work is seriously questionable, and should never have been accepted for a publication. It is not a reliable source, and I would not advise anyone to use it for comparative work.
As matters stand, (Shimizu, 1978) and (Kraft, 1981) remain the only reliable sources.

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[9] My own data comes directly from my field notes, and needs to be further analysed, specially concerning tone : I have heard and marked three tones, which may eventually be reduced to two. For each verb, I give the lexical form, followed by the verbal noun.

[10] For this verb, I have been given the meaning *to look like, to resemble*.